



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Nez Perce National Forest  
104 Airport Road  
Grangeville, ID 83530  
208-983-1950

Clearwater National Forest  
12730 Highway 12  
Orofino, ID 83544  
208-476-4541

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File Code: 1950

Date: January 30, 2012

Dear Planning Participant,

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests will be considering a number of project proposals and conducting environmental analysis in the near future. A separate decision will be made on each individual proposal. Please review the following proposals and submit your comments so they can be included in our analysis. Proposals are included in Part A or Part B (attached) based on their comment requirements.

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests have made a preliminary assessment that these proposals fall within categories of actions listed in 36 CFR 220.6 that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude use of the categories. Brief project descriptions are included below. If you are interested in submitting a comment on any of these projects, please follow the instructions below.

Thank you for your interest in the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

Sincerely,

  
for RICK BRAZELL  
Forest Supervisor

Attachments:  
Part A Projects  
Part B Projects



## PART A PROJECTS

### Introduction

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests will be considering the following 12 project proposals and conducting environmental analysis in the near future. Please review the following proposals and submit your comments as described below so they can be included in our analysis.

### How to Provide Comments

We are interested in your comments about these proposals and invite you to send site-specific written comments to us for the following projects:

- Dead Horse Trail Bridge Construction
- Mill Creek Trail Bridge Construction
- Square Mountain Trail #384 Reroute
- Corral Hill Outhouse and Interpretive Sign Installation
- Lower and East Sand Creek Placer Exploration
- Friday Minerals Exploration
- Heritage #2 Placer Exploration
- Newsome Placer Exploration
- American River Trail Improvements
- Pack Creek Bridge Construction
- Bledsoe Special Use Permit Issuance
- Pierce Water Tower Communications Building Replacement

To assure your written comments are fully considered during the analysis of this project, please submit your comments by March 5, 2012. Comments submitted after that date will be accepted, but our ability to respond effectively could be reduced. Please note that all comments received will be included in the public record; therefore, names, phone numbers, addresses, and e-mail addresses of participants cannot be kept confidential [7 CFR Part 1 Subpart B 1-27(c)].

If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding these projects, please feel free to contact Suzanne Acton or Norma Staaf at the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests office in Grangeville or call (208) 983-1950. Written comments should be submitted to Suzanne Acton, Small NEPA Coordinator, Nez Perce-Clearwater Forests Supervisor's Office, 104 Airport Road, Grangeville, Idaho 83530. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm (PST), Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments must be provided during normal business hours via telephone (208) 983-1950 or in person. Electronic comments should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf) or Word (.doc) to [comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us).

### Project Proposals

#### *Salmon River Ranger District*

##### **Dead Horse Trail Bridge Construction**

**Legal Description:** T26N R3E Sections 3 and 10

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(1) Construction and reconstruction of trails.

**Narrative Summary:** The Salmon River Ranger District proposes to improve the two Deadhorse Ridge Trail #301 stream crossings of Deadhorse Creek by installing two bridges. The resulting stream crossings would improve habitat for the anadromous and resident fish

populations by increasing cover and stream depth and reducing the turbidity and physical disturbance caused by forest visitors. The new bridges would also provide a safer and more enjoyable recreational experience for forest visitors.

The first bridge would have a span of 28 feet and the second bridge would have a span of 30 feet. The bridges would be constructed using the regionally approved Forest Service Standard Plans for Trail Bridges. All lumber would be pressure treated to extend the lifetime of the structure. Abutments for the bridges would likely be 3 by 9 feet. Wire mesh gabion baskets would be filled with rock gathered from the road cut of Forest Road 354G. All in stream activities would take place between the dates of July 1<sup>st</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup> to minimize impact to the aquatic species of concern.

Activities would conform to the *Biological Assessment for Stream Crossing Structure Replacement and Removal Activities Affecting ESA-listed Species in Idaho National Forests (Programmatic BA) (June 9, 2005)* or its revision.

The bridges would be constructed by agency personnel and members of the local ATV and motorcycle clubs. Generators, power equipment, rigging equipment, ATVs, and hand tools would be used in the construction of both structures. Design for these bridges would take place in 2012, with implementation planned for 2013.

A portion of this project area is located in the Little Slate Creek Idaho Roadless Area, with a Backcountry Restoration Theme, in the Idaho Roadless Rule (36 CFR 294 Subpart C). However, the project area is not located in any Nez Perce National Forest Plan FEIS Appendix C Roadless Area. The Idaho Roadless Rule does not affect existing roads or trails in Idaho Roadless Areas (36 CFR 294.26).

**Project Information:** If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Josh Lattin at (208) 839-2108.

### **Mill Creek Trail Bridge Construction**

**Legal Description:** T27N R3E Section 25 NE1/4

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(1) Construction and reconstruction of trails.

**Narrative Summary:** The Salmon River Ranger District proposes to replace Forest Trail #313's ford at Mill Creek with a bridge and hardened approaches to improve habitat for the anadromous and resident fish populations by increasing cover and stream depth and reducing the turbidity and physical disturbance caused by forest visitors, and to provide a safer and more enjoyable recreational experience for forest visitors.

The current ford would be restored, and replaced with a bridge immediately downstream of its present location. The bridge would be constructed using the regionally approved Forest Service Standard Plans for Trail Bridges. All lumber would be pressure treated to extend the lifetime of the structure. Abutments for the bridges would likely be 3 by 9 feet. Wire mesh gabion baskets would be filled with rock gathered on site.

The eastern approach would have the current corduroy logs removed and replaced with precast-concrete paver blocks and would be realigned to allow drainage. The western approach would have a twenty foot rock turnpike built through the current section of standing water. The turnpike would incorporate sufficient drainage to allow natural hydrological processes to occur.

All material for the turnpike would be found on site, as large rocks are plentiful in the area. A small borrow pit would be located and dug for the top course of the turnpike.

All in stream activity would take place between July 1<sup>st</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup> to reduce the impact on aquatic species. Activities would conform to the *Biological Assessment for Stream Crossing Structure Replacement and Removal Activities Affecting ESA-listed Species in Idaho National Forests (Programmatic BA) (June 9, 2005)* or its revision.

All work would be accomplished with Forest Service personnel and volunteers from the local ATV club. Materials would be transported to the site using ATVs and trailers. Generators, power equipment, rigging equipment, ATVs, and hand tools would be used to build the bridge. Design for this bridge would take place in 2012, with implementation planned for 2013.

**Project Information:** If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Josh Lattin at (208) 839-2108.

### **Square Mountain Trail #384 Reroute**

**Legal Description:** T26N R4E Section 9 SE1/4

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(1) Construction and reconstruction of trails.

**Narrative Summary:** The Salmon River Ranger District proposes to replace a 1200-foot segment of rutted Forest Trail #384 with an approximately 1800 foot reroute at a reduced grade to tie into Forest Trail #313 approximately 600 feet down the trail from its current location.

All work would be accomplished using hand tools such as pick-mattocks, pulaskis and shovels. Implementation could occur in 2012, and should last approximately 4 to 6 days. The reroute would be completed to Forest Service Standards for a Class 2 Pack and Saddle Trail.

The reroute would be constructed at a grade of 12 to 15 percent and incorporate grade reversals for drainage. The clearing limits would be established at 8 feet wide and 10 feet high as measured from the center of the finished tread, with a full bench cut with a finished tread of 20 inches. The beginning and end of the reroute would have a standard Forest Service blaze installed on the downhill side of the trail at approximately eye level to guide users to the reroute.

Drainage would be installed on the abandoned section of trail where possible. Log and rock check dams would be used to slow water flow and reduce further erosion. All compacted soil would be de-compacted with picks and allowed to re-vegetate naturally. Debris would be scattered in low to moderate densities to reduce erosion and camouflage the disturbed ground. Both entrances to the abandoned portion would have large logs or rocks placed in an un-obtrusive manner to discourage use. Natural re-vegetation could be monitored and aided with transplant or seed, if deemed necessary. The abandoned section would be monitored for noxious weeds for the following five years and any infestations would be treated with appropriate measures.

This trail is located in the Gospel Hump Wilderness (Management Area 9.2) in which the Forest Plan standard regarding trails states, "Maintain to ensure public safety, and to reduce environmental impacts".

**Project Information:** If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Josh Lattin at (208) 839-2108.

### **Lower and East Sand Creek Placer Exploration**

**Legal Description:** T25N R4E Sections 18 and 19

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8) Short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than one mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

**Narrative Summary:** The Salmon River Ranger District proposes to approve Kent Powell's proposal to excavate up to 18 test pits for the purpose of testing placer gravels for mineral values in the Sand Creek drainage area. These test pits would be dug with a small track mounted excavator and would be sized a maximum of 10 by 10 feet to a maximum depth to bedrock. Material would be processed with a 10 to 15 yard per hour capacity wash plant, which would discharge processed materials and water back into the pit. Process water would initially be drawn from Sand Creek, and recirculated from the test pit and reused. When finished, the pit would be refilled with material, topsoil would be replaced, and the affected area would be reseeded. Only one pit would be open at a time. This technique would preclude the need for discrete settling ponds and would minimize the amount of reclamation bond required.

No roads or trails would be constructed for this project. Access would be by existing roads and trails and by overland travel. Some dead and/or down timber may be removed for access and safety. A number of small trees may need to be removed. These would be cut down and piled to one side, then scattered about the disturbed area and left in place when work is finished.

Equipment used in the operation includes an excavator, wash plant, pickup truck, small conveyor, ATVs and a low pressure water pump. A camper or motor home would be used for living quarters, and would likely be parked at the old airstrip.

All appropriate BMPs for water quality standards and State of Idaho BMPs for mining would be followed. In addition, standard mitigation measures have been developed for mining and would be implemented as appropriate. A reclamation plan would be developed for this project. The bond would be calculated in an amount to cover all reclamation costs and would be posted by the claimant before the operating plan would be approved.

**Project Information:** If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Marty Jones at (208) 983-5158.

### **Corral Hill Outhouse and Interpretive Sign Installation**

**Legal Description:** T30N R5E Section 10

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(d)(5) Repair and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities.

**Narrative Summary:** The Salmon River Ranger District proposes to install an outhouse and an interpretive sign near the junction of Forest Roads 284 and 284A near Corral Hill along the Elk City Wagon Road recreation site. The outhouse would require a hole be dug for the vault, and posts would be set for the interpretive sign. The project is expected to take about two days for installation. The Elk City Wagon Road Management Plan (signed 10/9/1992) recommended investigation of installation of a restroom around Corral Hill (pg. 18).

**Project Information:** If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Randy Borniger at (208) 842-2110.

## ***Red River Ranger District***

### **Friday Minerals Exploration**

**Legal Description:** T27N R7E Sections 12 and 13; and T27N R8E Sections 7 and 18

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8) Short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than one mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

**Narrative Summary:** The Red River Ranger District proposes to approve Premium Exploration's proposal to conduct exploratory drilling at a total of eighteen drill sites in the Crooked River area of the Red River Ranger District. Each drill site would encompass a surface area of approximately 30 by 50 feet. A maximum of two holes, 3 to 6 inches in diameter would be drilled at each site using a self contained track mounted drill rig. The drill rig is self leveling to minimize the need for leveling of the area. A sump would be dug at each site to contain drill fluid and to allow drill cuttings to settle out. Drill fluid is comprised of water and a clay derivative. This sump would average 3 feet wide by 3 to 4 feet deep and approximately 20 feet long. Water for the drill rig would be brought in from off-site in a truck or trailer mounted tank.

Each drill hole would be filled and plugged when completed according to the State of Idaho Best Management Practices (BMPs) for filling and plugging drill holes. Each site would be reclaimed when work at that site is completed before moving on to the next drill site. Each drill site would be accessed using existing roads. Required surface disturbance may include brushing of existing roads and removal of waterbars.

Most of the drill sites are adjacent to or on existing roads or old road templates which would require no work other than clearing of deadfall to access the site. Some minor widening of the road surface may be required at some of the sites for drill pads, depending on the orientation of the drill rig. Three sites would require overland travel to access, and one site would require some minor road reconstruction (approximately ¼ mile).

All appropriate BMPs for water quality standards and State of Idaho BMPs for mining would be followed. In addition, standard mitigation measures have been developed for mining and would be implemented as appropriate. A reclamation plan would be developed for this project. The bond would be calculated in an amount to cover all reclamation costs and would be posted by the claimant before the operating plan would be approved.

**Project Information:** If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Marty Jones at (208) 983-5158.

### **Heritage #2 Placer Exploration**

**Legal Description:** T30N R6E Sections 12 and 13

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8) Short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than one mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

**Narrative Summary:** The Red River Ranger District proposes to approve Tim Hoskins' proposal to excavate 17 placer test pits in the Newsome Creek drainage area. These pits would be 10 by 10 feet to 10 by 12 feet, down to bedrock if possible. Material would be processed by



first excavating all materials from a pit, separating it by layers (topsoil, overburden, pay material, etc), and processing it with a small recirculating type trommel and sluice box combination. No settling ponds would be necessary. Process water would initially be drawn from Newsome Creek, and recirculated from a 100-gallon holding tank and reused. An approximately 1000-gallon capacity dewatering ditch would also be dug next to the processing plant, and would be used for periodic flushing of the holding tank. When finished, the pit and dewatering trench would be refilled with material, topsoil would be replaced, and the affected area would be reseeded. Only one pit would be open at a time. This technique precludes the need for discrete settling ponds and would minimize the amount of reclamation bond required. The equipment used would include the processing plant, a small rubber tired backhoe/loader and possibly a D2 caterpillar. ATVs with trailers would be used to access the project area and to transport equipment and supplies as needed. Access would be by existing roads and trails. No new road or trail reconstruction would be required.

Reclamation would be concurrent with the operation. As testing is completed at each pit, it would be reclaimed, recontoured, and seeded and mulched as needed.

All appropriate BMPs for water quality standards and State of Idaho BMPs for mining would be followed. In addition, standard mitigation measures have been developed for mining and would be implemented as appropriate. A reclamation plan would be developed for this project. The bond would be calculated in an amount to cover all reclamation costs and would be posted by the claimant before the operating plan would be approved.

**Project Information:** If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Marty Jones at (208) 983-5158.

### **Newsome Placer Exploration**

**Legal Description:** T29N R7E Section 5

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8) Short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than one mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

**Narrative Summary:** The Red River Ranger District proposes to approve Press Thomas' proposal to excavate up to 12 test pits for the purpose of testing placer gravels for mineral values in the Newsome Creek drainage area.

These test pits would be dug with a 580 Case backhoe and would be sized a maximum of 12 by 12 feet to a maximum depth to bedrock, and dredge tailings would also be tested for mineral values. Material would be processed with a four yard per hour capacity G1 wash plant, which would discharge processed materials and water back into the pit. Process water would initially be drawn from Newsome Creek and recirculated from the test pit and reused. When finished, each pit would be refilled and recontoured. Only one pit would be open at a time. This technique would preclude the need for discrete settling ponds and would minimize the amount of reclamation bond required. Processed material from dredge tailings would be smoothed over the area and covered with existing topsoil, duff and woody debris where available, and the affected area would be reseeded.

Some dead and/or down timber may be removed for access and safety. A number of small trees may need to be removed. These would be cut down and piled to one side, then scattered about the immediate area and left in place when work is finished.

Equipment used in the operation includes a 580 Case rubber tired backhoe, G-1 wash plant, ATVs, rubber tired Bobcat loader, and a pickup. A camper or motor home would be used for living quarters at the Sing Lee campground.

Access would be by Forest Road 1858 (Newsome Creek Road). No roads or trails would be need to be constructed for this project.

A portion of this project area is located in the Nez Perce National Forest Plan FEIS Appendix C Silver Creek-Pilot Knob Roadless Area (Management Area 11), but not in any Idaho Roadless areas as identified in the Idaho Roadless Rule (36 CFR 294 Subpart C). The Forest Plan management standard for minerals for this area specifically states, "Provide access for exploration and development of locatable and leasable mineral resources. However, new road construction will only be approved where a road is necessary for the next stage of development of the mineral resource, and where other means of access would be unreasonable. Roads will be constructed to minimum standards "suitable" for the proposed use, and will be obliterated to the extent feasible after completion of activities". For this project, no new roads or trails are proposed. Additionally, the project area lies within an area of previously disturbed dredge tailings between Newsome Creek and Forest Road 1858.

All appropriate BMPs for water quality standards and State of Idaho BMPs for mining would be followed. In addition, standard mitigation measures have been developed for mining and would be implemented as appropriate. A reclamation plan would be developed for this project. The bond would be calculated in an amount to cover all reclamation costs and would be posted by the claimant before the operating plan would be approved.

**Project Information:** If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Marty Jones at (208) 983-5158.

### **American River Trail Improvements**

**Legal Description:** T30N R8E Sections 3, 10, 15, 16, 21, 28, 33, 34; and T31N R8E Sections 33 and 34

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(1) Construction and reconstruction of trails.

**Narrative Summary:** The Red River Ranger District proposes to relocate at least one mile and improve approximately seven miles of Trail #836. Approximately one mile would be relocated to the edge of a meadow to decrease the number of crossings of American River. Currently, 10 trail crossings exist from Limber Luke stream to the trailhead. This project would eliminate 8 crossings. The remaining 2 crossings in the lower four miles would be hardened to prevent salmon and steelhead from spawning at these sites. The streambanks would be protected to reduce erosion. Fourteen additional crossing remain along the upper approximately three miles of stream from Limber Luke to the headwaters. The trail and crossings would be evaluated, and moved or eliminated, where possible, to reduce the impacts to the streambanks and wetlands. Steelhead, bull trout and Chinook salmon migrate to, spawn, and rear in American River, and proposed activities would reduce sediment inputs, as well as physical harm to these species. Reclamation of the old tread through the meadows would also occur. Work would be accomplished with hand crews, and would be implemented in July, August, and September



depending on ground and flow conditions. Bank stabilization and crossing hardening would occur during the instream work window of July 1<sup>st</sup> to August 15<sup>th</sup>. Work should be accomplished in one season.

A portion of this project area is located in the Nez Perce National Forest Plan FEIS Appendix C Lick Point Roadless Area, and also identified as the Lick Point Idaho Roadless Area, with a Backcountry Restoration Theme, in the Idaho Roadless Rule (36 CFR 294 Subpart C). The Forest Plan management standard for trails in riparian areas states, “Minimize crossings in riparian areas. Cross streams at as near a right angle as practical. Construction parallel to streams (in riparian areas) should be avoided. Opportunities to remove roads and trails from riparian areas should be considered if they are producing significant impacts on riparian-dependent resources.” For this project, the objective is to minimize crossings. The Idaho Roadless Rule does not affect existing roads or trails in Idaho Roadless Areas (36 CFR 294.26).

**Project Information:** If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Erin Grinde at (208) 983-4190.

## ***Powell Ranger District***

### **Pack Creek Bridge Construction**

#### **Legal Description:**

Pack Cr. #1	Rd. 5671	MP-0.04	T38N, R15E, Sec. 21, SW <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> SE <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
Pack Cr. #2	Rd. 373-A	MP-0.10	T38N, R15E, Sec. 15, SW <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> SW <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
Pack Cr. #3	Rd. 5956	MP-0.15	T38N, R15E, Sec. 13, NW <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> SW <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(d)(4) Repair and maintenance of roads, trails, and landline boundaries.

**Narrative Summary:** The Powell Ranger District, in partnership with the Nez Perce Tribe, proposes to replace three existing culverts with steel beam, treated timber deck bridges to provide for fish passage and reduce the risk of failure. These crossings are located within the Crooked Fork Creek watershed. They are being designed now for implementation in 2012, 2013, and 2014 depending on available funding.

The project would occur during the low water flow period generally between July and the end of September. Excavators and dump trucks would be used to remove the existing road fill and old culvert at each of the sites. Each crossing has minimal fill existing now. The structure would be constructed to bankfull width plus an additional two feet of width to allow for stream bank development within the structure. All bridges would be designed to accommodate a 100-year stream flow event with 2 feet of freeboard.

Work at these sites would require closure of Forest Service Roads 5671, 373A, and 5956. Past reconstruction work of similar size and scope resulted in road closures of approximately three to four weeks. After completion of the bridges, the road would be resurfaced and reopened to traffic.

All appropriate BMPs that protect or minimize effects to water quality would be implemented including dewatering of the work site, upstream, downstream, and worksite erosion control measures, and revegetation of disturbed soils after project completion. Activities would conform to the *Biological Assessment for Stream Crossing Structure Replacement and Removal Activities*

*Affecting ESA-listed Species in Idaho National Forests (Programmatic BA) (June 9, 2005) or its revision.*

Improving passage to historic fish habitat would benefit local native cutthroat trout and other aquatic species. Access to these areas provides refuge habitat in the event of large landscape disturbances (e.g. fire) and allows for genetic exchange between populations throughout the Crooked Fork Creek drainage. Providing appropriately sized structures would also minimize risk failure by reducing the risk of plugging by woody material moving downstream. Minimizing failure risk also reduces the risk of unwanted sediment input into streams which can negatively affect aquatic habitats. Long term maintenance costs would also be reduced because debris is not likely to accumulate on the larger structures.

**Project Information:** If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Chuck Fowlds at (208) 476-8369.

#### **Bledsoe Special Use Permit Issuance**

**Legal Description:** T37N R14E Section 33

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous areas of land.

**Narrative Summary:** The Powell Ranger District proposes to issue Scott Bledsoe a special use permit for a four foot high split rail fence which extends approximately 287 feet onto National Forest system lands along the south side of Forest Road 102. The Powell Creek Road (Forest Road 102) runs from Highway 12 to the Elk Summit Road #111, passing through the Powell Ranger District administrative site. The road segment with the fence is east of the administrative site.

The road has considerable pedestrian and 'lost' vehicle traffic, and prior to the installation of the fence, the public meandered off the road and onto private property. The fence has helped to allow continued use of the road without incidents of private property trespass. No new ground disturbance is proposed.

**Project Information:** If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Zilia Lewis at (208) 935-4255.

### ***North Fork Ranger District***

#### **Pierce Water Tower Communications Building Replacement**

**Legal Description:** T37N R5E Section 34

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(d)(3) Repair and maintenance of administrative sites.

**Narrative Summary:** The North Fork Ranger District proposes to replace the approximately six by six foot Pierce Water Tower Communications Building with a solid building of the same dimensions designed to minimize insect infestations at the Pierce water tower radio site on land leased from the City of Pierce. The current building is in need of repair and replacing it would provide the infrastructure for current and future forest telecommunications needs. Planned time to install the building is May to October 2012. A dump truck and backhoe would be used to remove the old building and install the new building.

**Project Information:** If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Brian Johnson at (208) 476-8246.

## PART B PROJECTS

### Introduction

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests will be considering the following project proposal and conducting environmental analysis in the near future. Please review the following proposal and submit your comments as described below so they can be included in our analysis. This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215, as clarified in the court order dated October 19, 2005 by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in Case No. CIV F-03-6386JKS.

### How to Provide Comments

We are interested in your comments about this proposal and invite you to send site-specific written comments to us. For the *Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests Precommercial Thinning* project, written, facsimile, hand-delivered and oral comments will be accepted for 30 calendar days following publication of a legal notice in the Lewiston Morning Tribune. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. One should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Written comments should be submitted to Suzanne Acton, Small NEPA Coordinator, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests Supervisor's Office, 104 Airport Road, Grangeville, Idaho 83530. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm (PST), Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments must be provided during normal business hours via telephone (208) 983-1950 or in person. Electronic comments should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf) or Word (.doc) to [comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us).

If you choose to comment on the proposal, please include the following: (1) your name, address, and (if possible) your telephone number, and organization represented (if any); (2) title of the project on which you are submitting comments; (3) specific facts and related rationale concerning this project that you feel should be considered. For appeal eligibility, each individual must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request. Additional information regarding how to comment can be found at 36 CFR 215.6.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names, phone numbers, addresses, and e-mail addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments may not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Part 215. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality and the available options at that time (see 7 CFR 1.27 for further information).

## **Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests Precommercial Thinning**

### **Introduction**

The Moose Creek Ranger District of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests proposes to pre-commercial thin approximately 1243 acres of previously harvested, over-stocked, mixed conifer species stands from 2012 to 2014 in young forest stands which have resulted from regeneration harvests in the last 15 to 25 years on the Moose Creek Ranger District, Nez-Perce-Clearwater National Forests, Idaho County, Idaho as follows (Boise Meridian) (see attached maps):

- T30 N R5 E Sections 12, 13, and 14
- T30 N R6 E Sections 4, 5, and 7
- T30 N R7 E Sections 4 and 9
- T31 N R5 E Sections 23, 24, 28, and 33
- T31 N R6 E Sections 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, and 33
- T31 N R7 E Sections 1, 3, 4, 10, and 11
- T31 N R8 E Sections 11, 14, 23, and 29
- T31 N R9 E Sections 7, 18, 29, and 30
- T32 N R6 E Sections 28, 32, and 33
- T32 N R7 E Sections 16, 17, 20, 25, 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests propose to precommercial thin approximately 805 acres of previously harvested, over-stocked, mixed conifer species stands from 2012 to 2015 in young forest stands which have resulted from regeneration harvests in the last 15 to 25 years located on the Lochsa (139 acres), Powell (8 acres), North Fork (316 acres), and Palouse (189 acres) Ranger Districts, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, Latah, Idaho and Clearwater Counties, Idaho as follows (Boise Meridian) (see attached maps):

- T34N R6E Section 13
- T34N R7E Sections 5 and 6
- T35N R6E Sections 18 and 19
- T35N R7E Sections 4, 5, and 6
- T36N R6E Sections 7 and 8
- T36N R7E Sections 31 and 33
- T37N R7E Sections 20, 21, and 29
- T38N R14E Section 13
- T40N R1W Sections 26 and 27
- T40N R7E Sections 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 21
- T40N R8E Sections 25, 26, and 36
- T42N R2W Sections 4, 7, 8, and 9
- T43N R3W Sections 24 and 25

The proposed category for this project is: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(6) Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction.

## **Purpose and Need**

### ***Purpose (Desired Condition)***

The purpose of this project is to:

- ✓ To maintain and promote shade intolerant seral species. The shade intolerant seral species generally tend to be more fire resistant and longer-lived than the shade tolerant species.
- ✓ To increase the amount of sunlight to the ground and sustain the diversity of early seral vegetation species including those browse species important to big game and to also lengthen the time period that this forage would otherwise be available.
- ✓ To reduce the long-term fire hazard conditions in the stands to be treated and adjacent forest by:
  - By reducing the ladder fuel hazard and the potential fuel buildup from future stem exclusion tree mortality.
  - By creating a break in the continuity of standing dense ladder fuels across the landscape.
- ✓ To accelerate the diameter and height growth on the remaining selected trees in order to increase future timber yield potential and to accelerate successional development to the larger size classes.
- ✓ To improve the vigor of the remaining trees to make them more resistant to insect and disease attacks and less vulnerable to ice and snow damage and thereby promote long-term forest health and resiliency.

Forest-wide management direction in the Nez Perce National Forest Plan related to this project can be found on pages II-15 to II-27 (USDA Forest Service, 1987). The management area direction for Management Areas (MA) 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, and 21 may also apply to this project. These management areas provide direction to: Manage for timber production and other multiple uses on a sustained yield basis (MA 12); manage to produce sustained yields of sawtimber and other wood products, while meeting the visual quality objectives of retention or partial retention and improving the quality of the winter range habitat for deer and elk on the appropriate areas (MA 14); manage to produce sustained yields of sawtimber and other wood products, while improving the quality of the deer and elk winter habitat on the appropriate areas (MA 15); improve the quality of the winter range habitat for deer and elk through timber harvesting, prescribed burning, and other management practices (MA 16); manage to improve the quality of the winter habitat for deer and elk through timber harvesting or prescribed burning, while meeting visual quality objectives of retention or partial retention on the appropriate acres (MA 18); and manage the grand fir-Pacific yew plant communities to provide for a continuing presence of Pacific yew "suitable" for moose winter habitat (MA 21). Nine units on the Moose Creek Ranger District are located in the Nez Perce National Forest Plan FEIS Appendix C Clear Creek Roadless Area, and are adjacent to the Clear Creek Idaho Roadless Area, with a Backcountry Restoration Theme, in the Idaho Roadless Rule (36 CFR 294 Subpart C), however, no activities are proposed in the Idaho Roadless area, and all proposed activities would occur in previously harvested stands.

Forest-wide management direction in the Clearwater National Forest Plan related to this project can be found on pages II-20 to II-40 (USDA Forest Service, 1987). The management area

direction for Management Area (MA) E1 may also apply to this project. This management area contains direction to provide optimum, sustained production of wood products (MA E1).

### ***Need (Existing Condition)***

These previously harvested stands are overstocked with seedling and sapling conifer species. Stocking ranges from 500 to over 5000 stems per acre.

In support of proposed efforts, handbooks and research analyses, such as FSH 2409.17 *Silvicultural Practices Handbook R1-Supplement 2409.17-99-1* (USDA Forest Service 1999) and *Precommercial Thinning of Coastal and Intermountain Forests in the Pacific Northwest* (Ed. Baumgartner 1971) recommend precommercial thinning activities to maintain and promote shade intolerant seral species, increase the amount of sunlight to the ground, reduce the long-term fire hazard conditions in the stands, accelerate the diameter and height growth on the remaining selected trees, and improve the vigor of the remaining trees.

## **Proposed Action**

The Moose Creek Ranger District of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests proposes to pre-commercial thin approximately 1243 acres and the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests propose to pre-commercial thin approximately 805 acres located on the Palouse (189 acres), Powell (8 acres), Lochsa (139 acres), and North Fork (316 acres) Ranger Districts of previously harvested, over-stocked, mixed conifer species stands.

- ✓ All work would be done by hand using chainsaws. There would be no ground disturbing activities associated with this project.
- ✓ Only trees less than 5 inches in diameter would be felled, however, cull live trees up to 8 inches in diameter that would never make a crop tree would also be felled.
- ✓ No burning would occur in the stands after thinning or release, nor would any further mechanical slash treatment be done, except on approximately 136 acres in four Palouse Ranger District Units. In these units, slash would be handpiled and burned along existing temporary roads to reduce the fire hazard conditions.
- ✓ Only existing roads would be used to provide access to the sites. All trees that are felled across any Forest road or trail would be removed.
- ✓ No thinning would occur within RHCAs in the Moose Creek Ranger District stands.
- ✓ Thinning could occur within the boundaries of riparian habitat conservation areas (RHCAs) in the Clearwater National Forest's stands where such treatments promote the attainment of riparian management objectives. No trees would be cut which are rooted in the stream channel bank. Any slash that could possibly wash down a channel and block a culvert would be pulled back out of the stream channel.

## **Environmental Issues**

Potential issues identified through consultation with Forest Service resource specialists and from issues identified from similar past projects include:

- Effects to watershed, and other forest resources;
- Effects to wildlife habitat.



## **Decisions to Be Made**

The decisions to be made are:

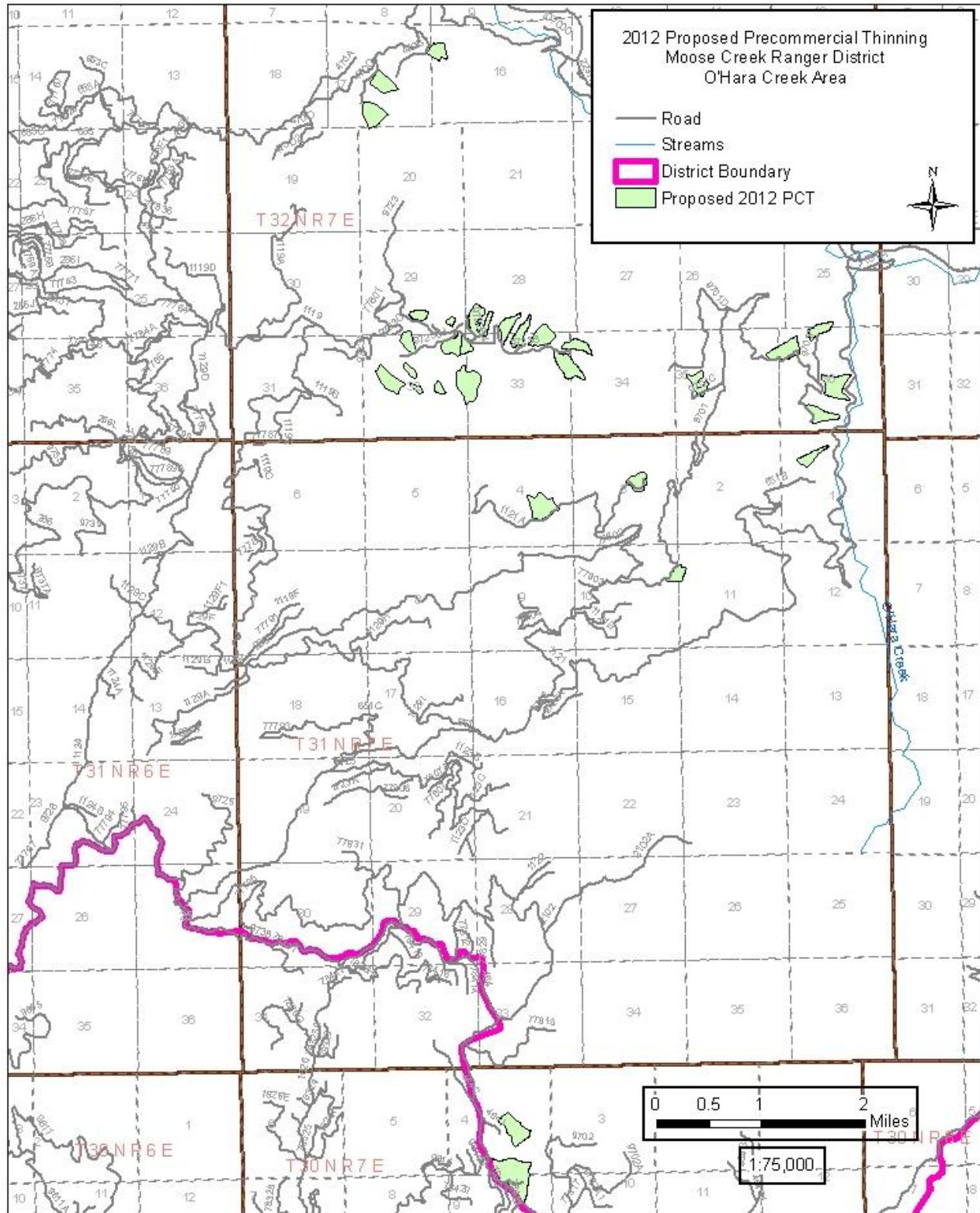
- Whether or not to precommercial thin approximately 2050 acres.
- If the areas are treated, what stipulations to implementation would be required?

## **Project Information**

If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Mark Klinke at (208) 476-8300.

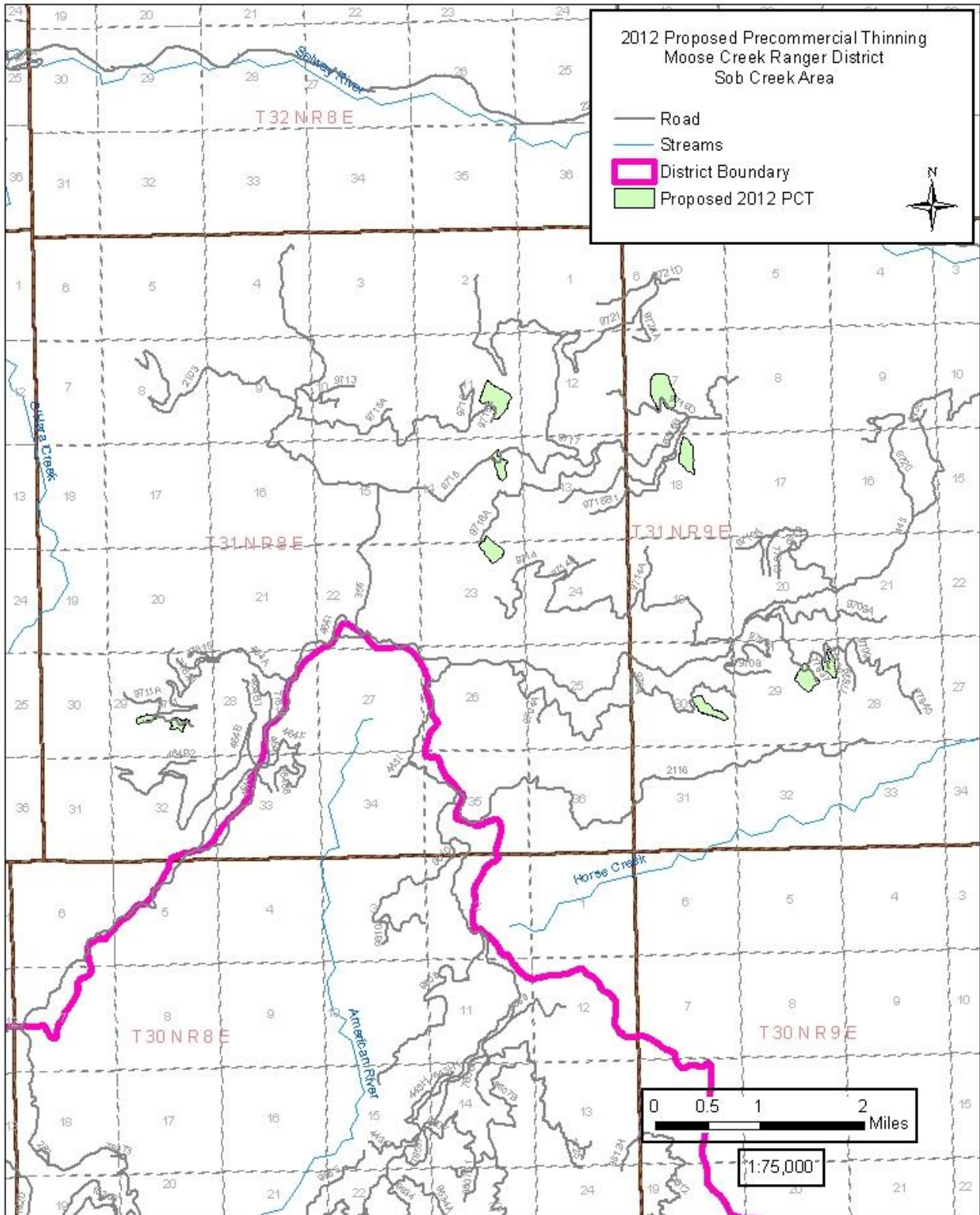


***Moose Creek Ranger District Precommercial Thin Project Map 2***

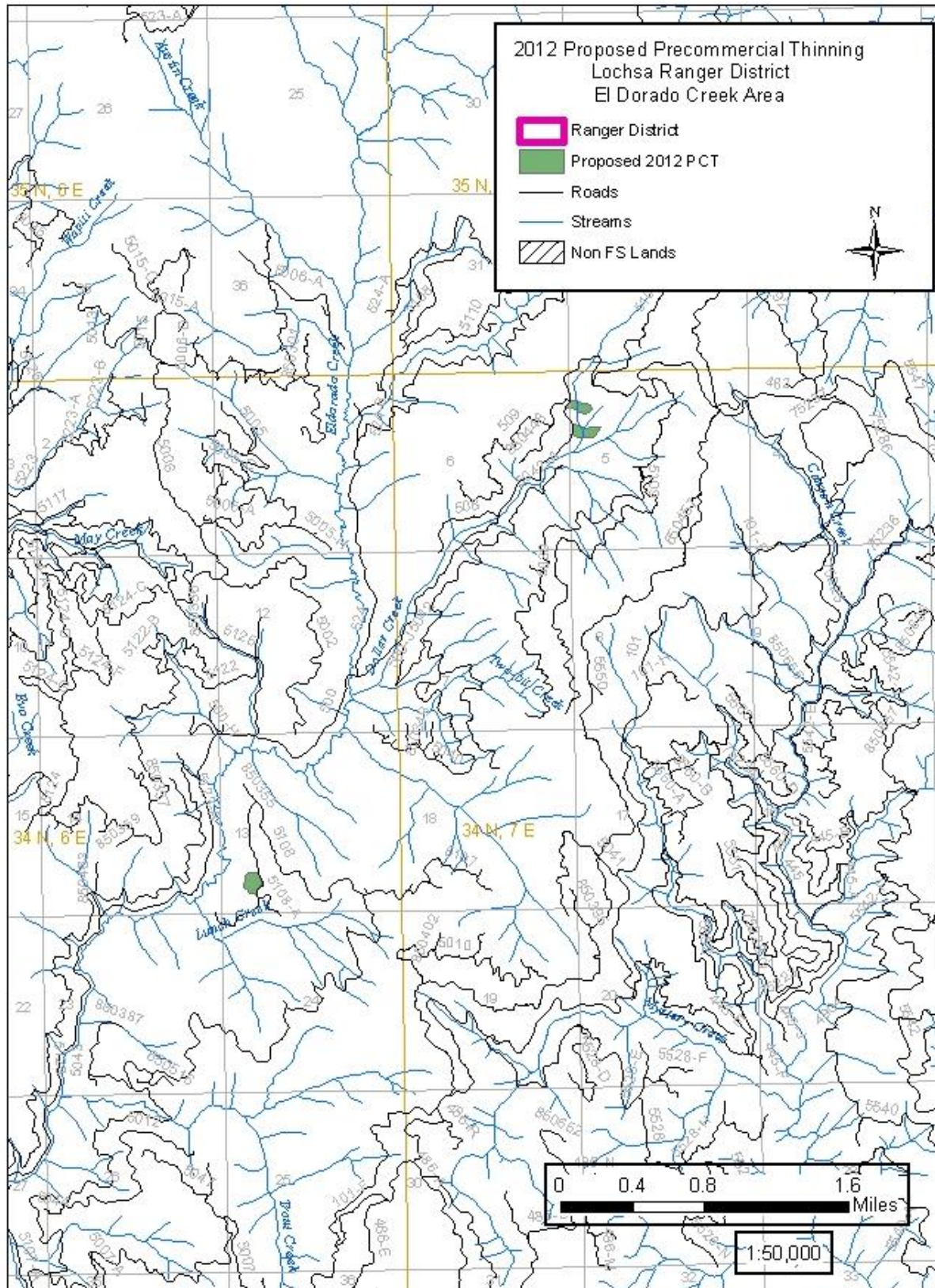




***Moose Creek Ranger District Precommercial Thin Project Map 3***

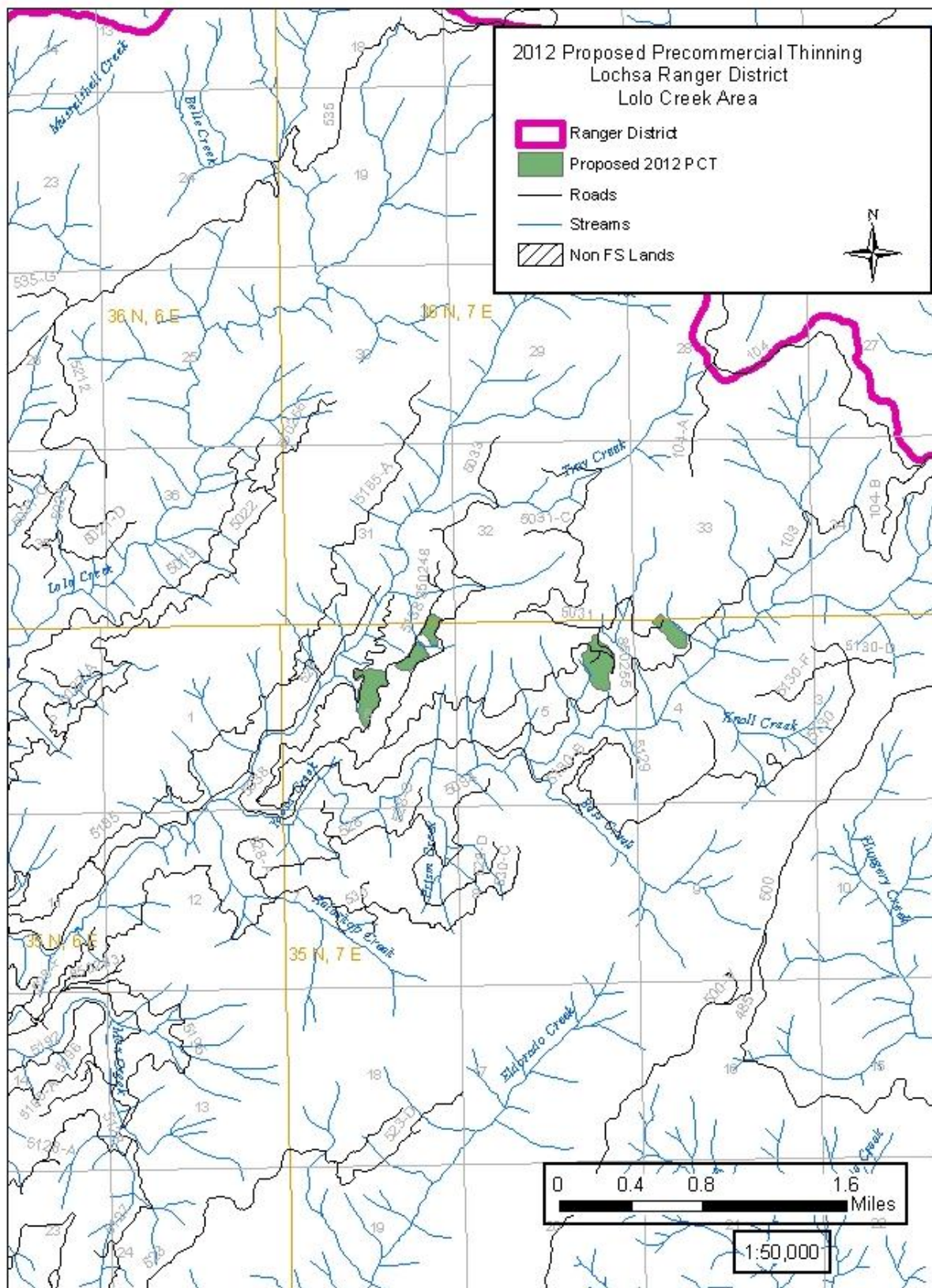


***Lochsa Ranger District Precommercial Thin Project Map 1***



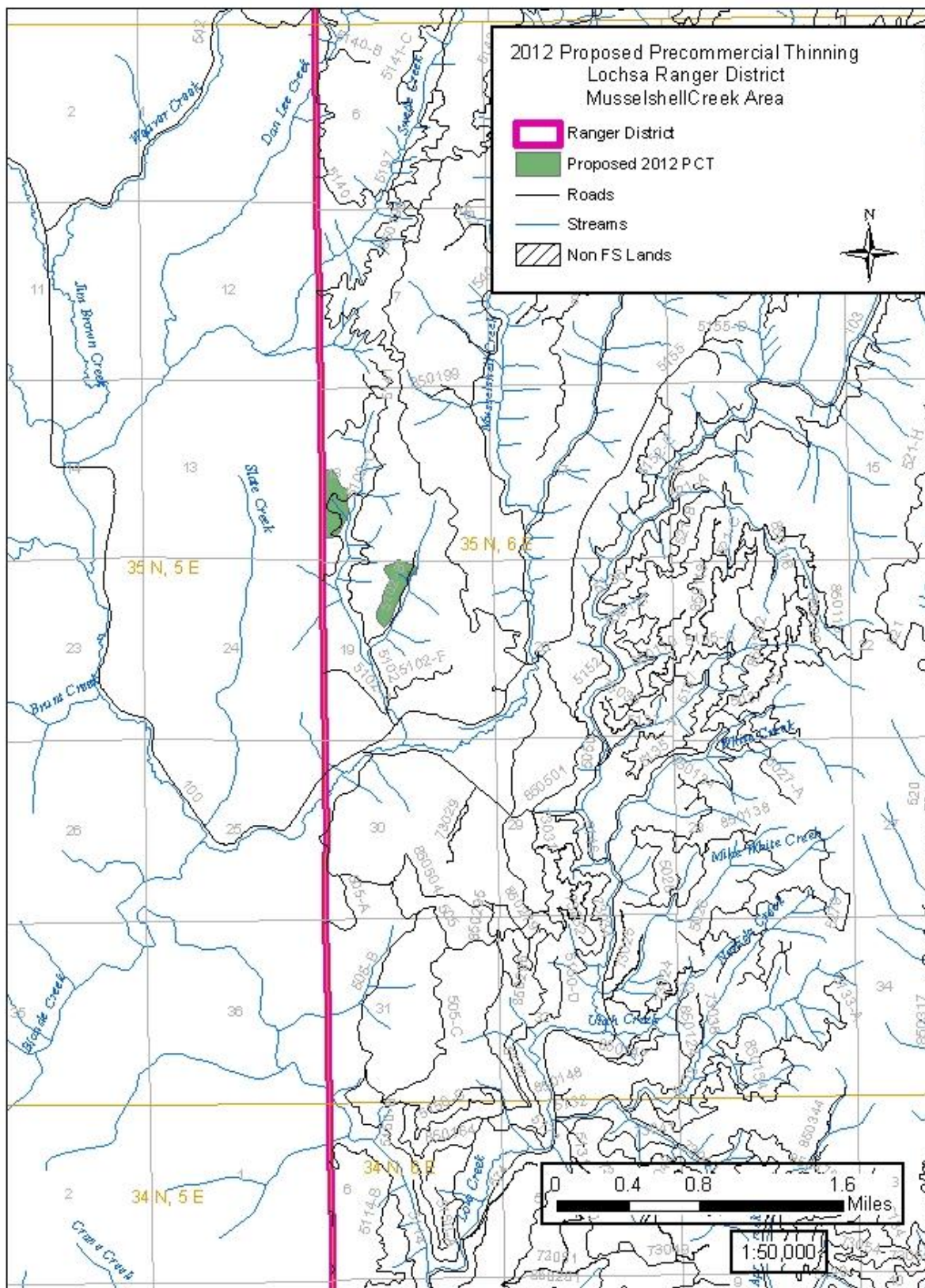


**Lochsa Ranger District Precommercial Thin Project Map 2**



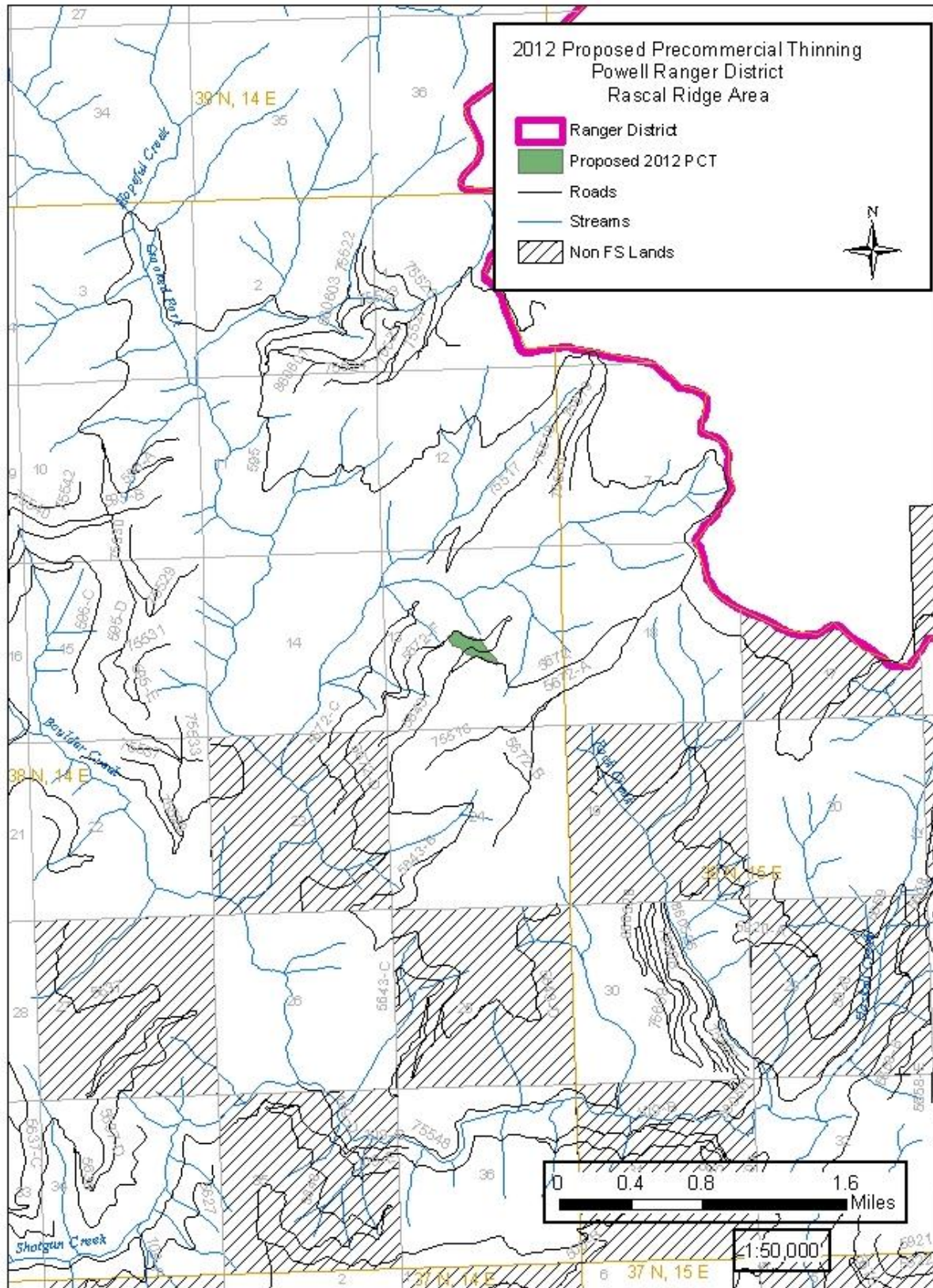


### Lochsa Ranger District Precommercial Thin Project Map 3



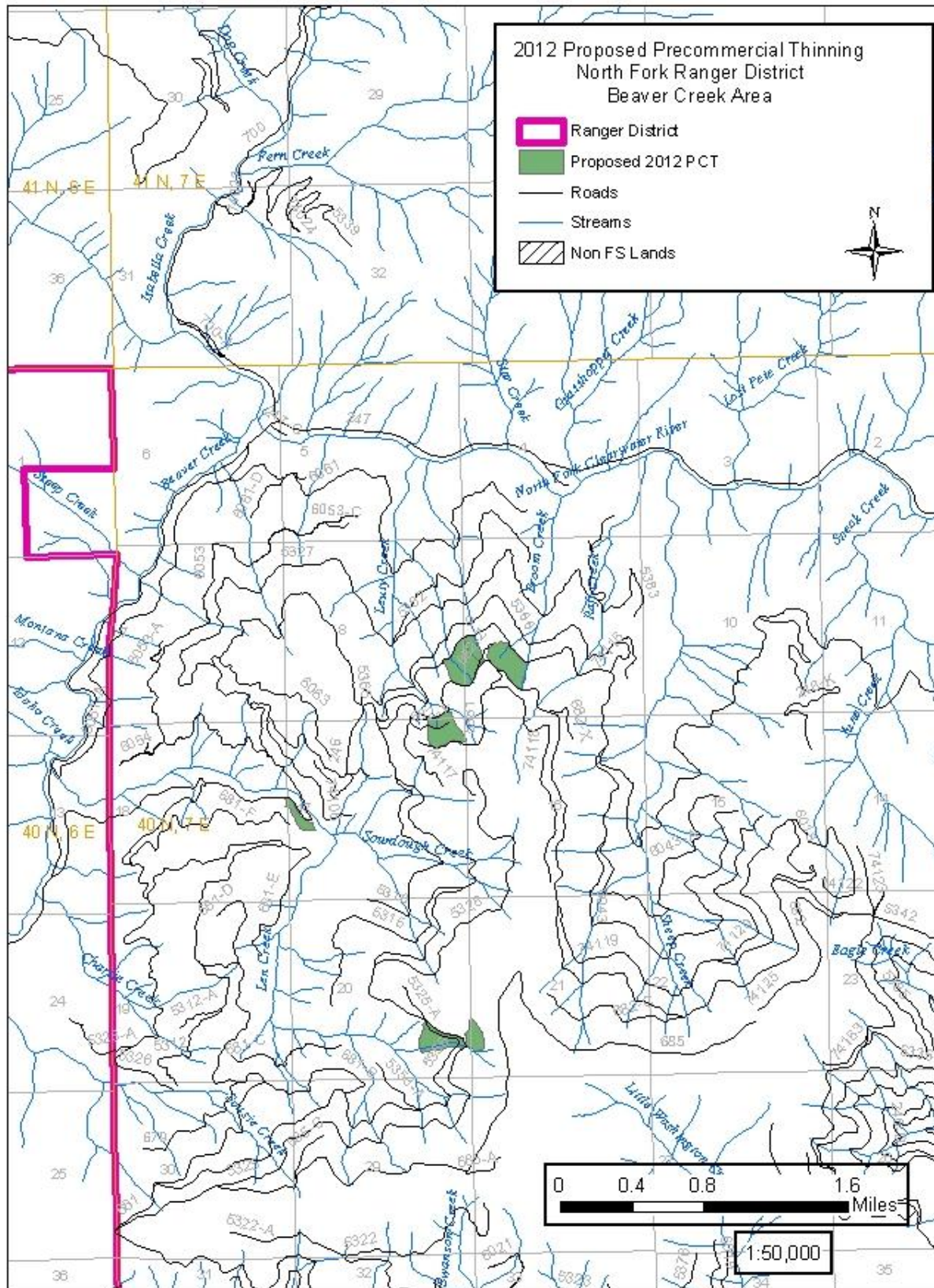


***Powell Ranger District Precommercial Thin Project Map 1***

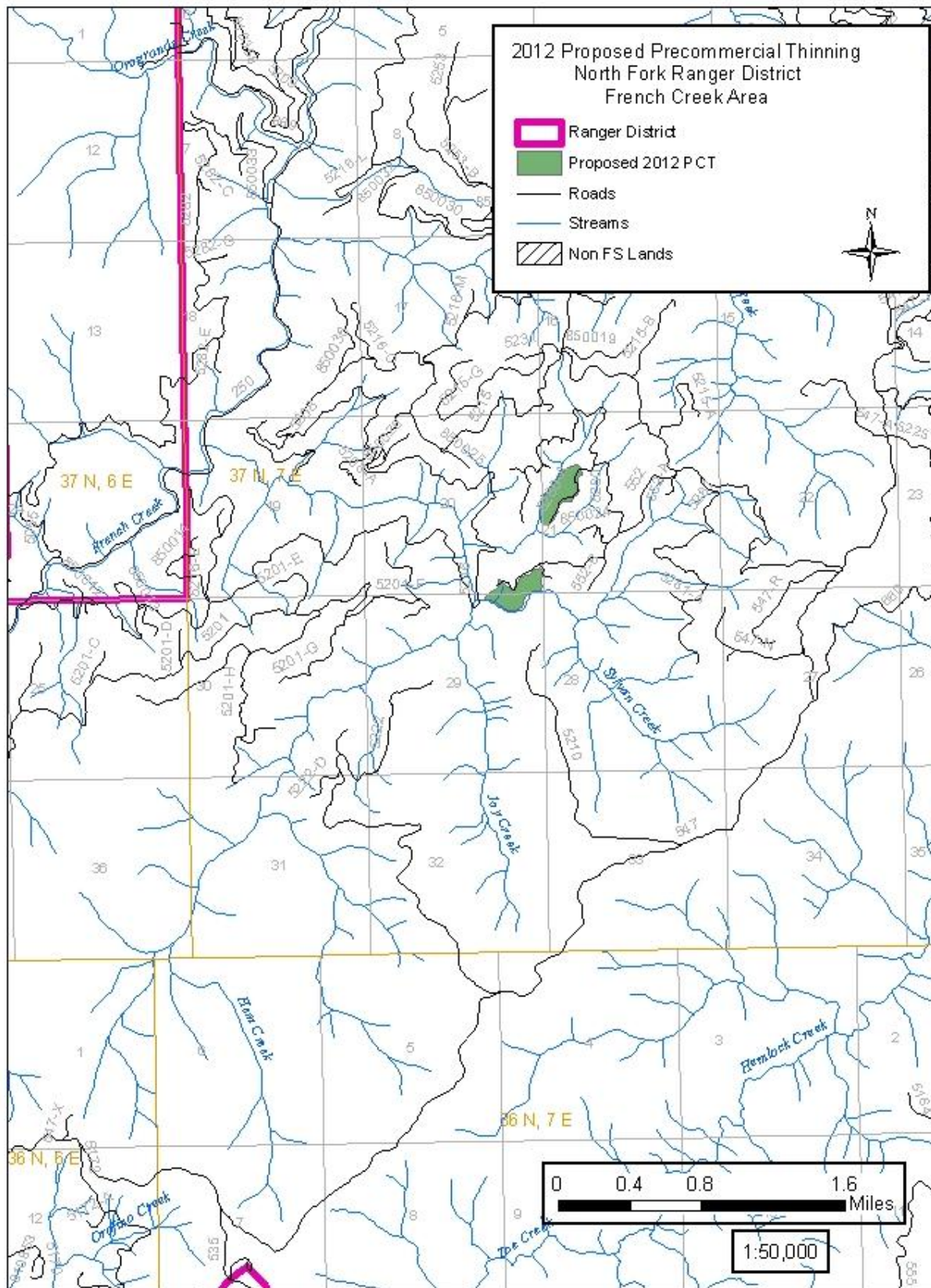




# **North Fork Ranger District Precommercial Thin Project Map 1**

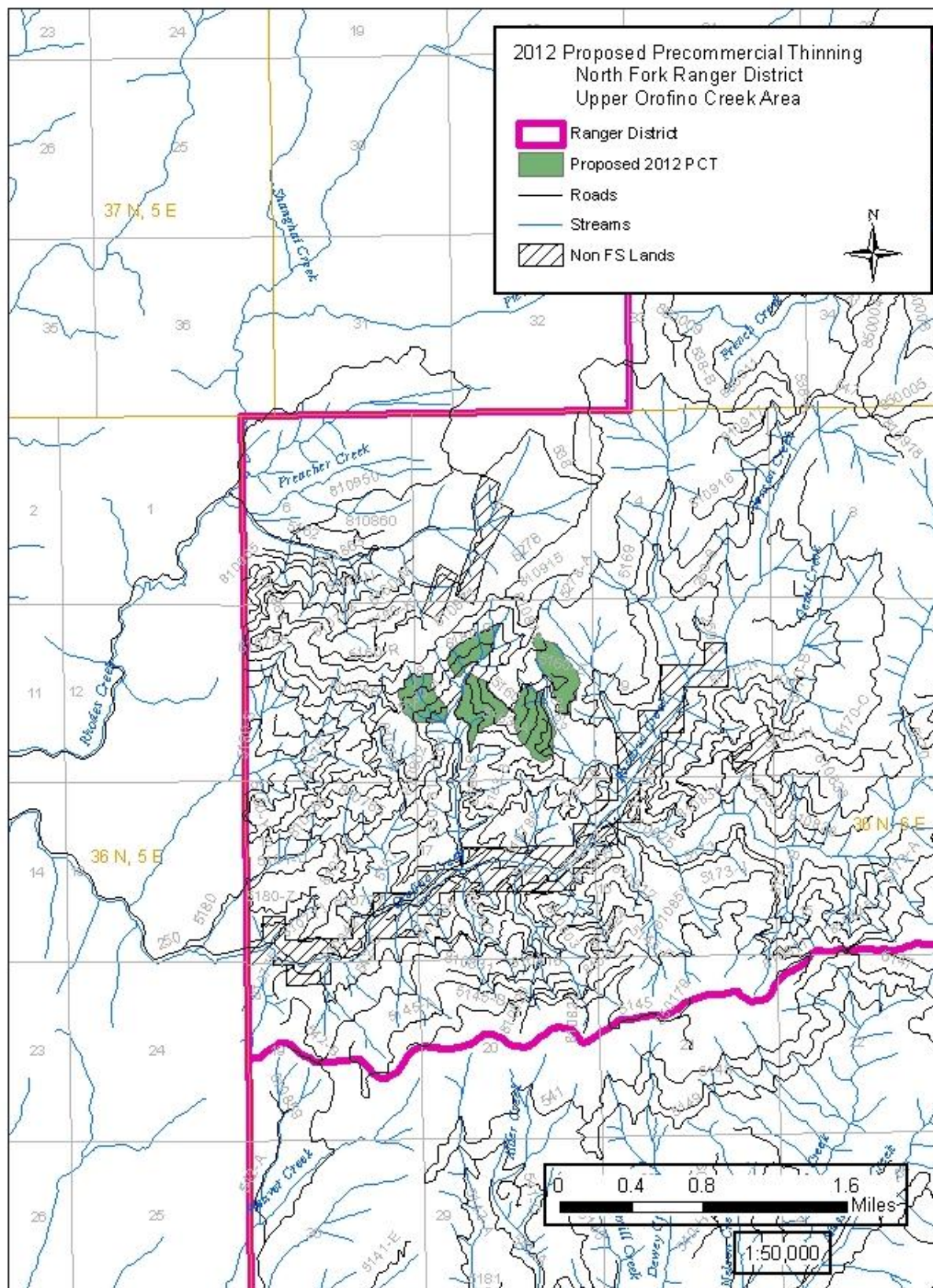


**North Fork Ranger District Precommercial Thin Project Map 2**



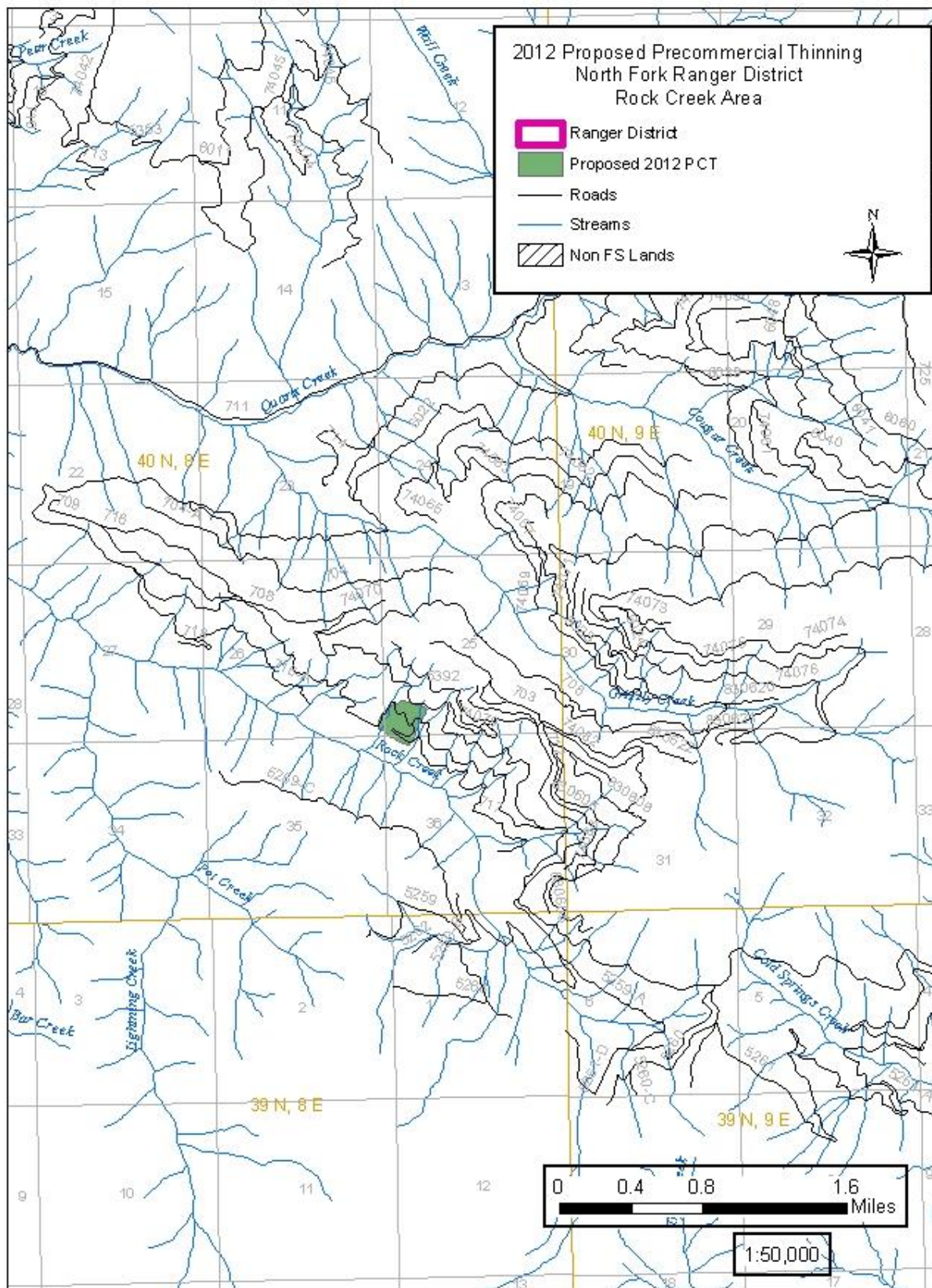


**North Fork Ranger District Precommercial Thin Project Map 3**



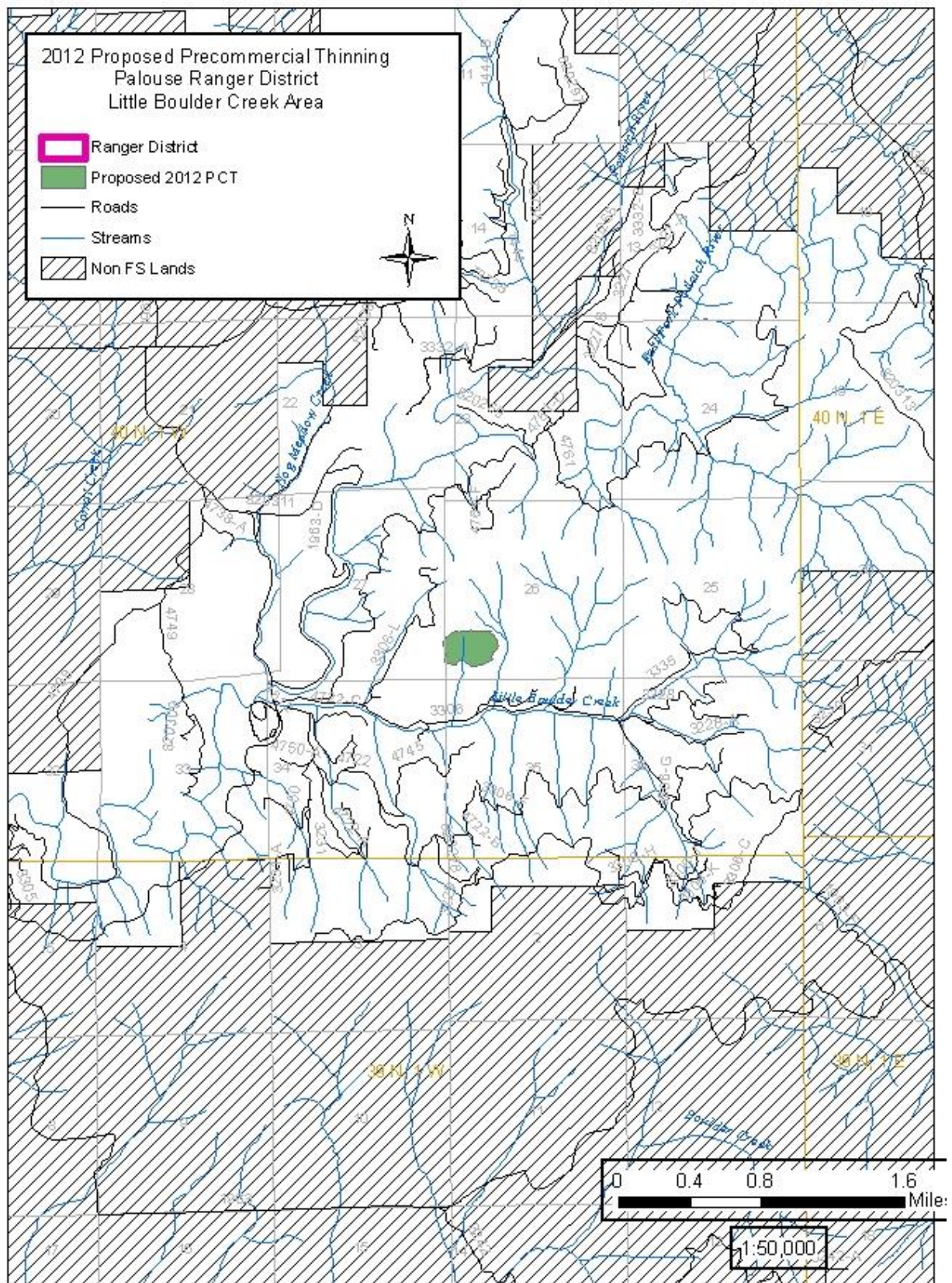


**North Fork Ranger District Precommercial Thin Project Map 4**





***Palouse Ranger District Precommercial Thin Project Map 1***





**Palouse Ranger District Precommercial Thin Project Map 2**

